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SOME SONGS THAT ECHO THROUGHOUT EUROPE

THE origin of the British National Anthem is unknown. Some there are who attribute it to Dr. Bull, organist to James VI of Scotland, and I of England; others declare in favor of Henry Carey, of "Sally in Our Alley" fame. Between these two the authorship and composition almost certainly rest, but it has been found impossible definitely to decide for the one or the other. The music of "God Save the King" is simple and straightforward, but it agrees well with the comparatively peaceful, regular course of events which have marked public affairs in England for over two hundred years past. But with the conflict of these latter days something martial and more soul-stirring is needed, or why does "Tipperary" get the preference?

The best suited of all our songs for national purposes is decidedly "Rule Britannia!" Southey speaks of it as "an ode in honor of Great Britain which will be the political hymn of this country as long as she maintains her political power." And Southey is right. The song appeared first in an operetta written by Thomson and Mallet, and it is thus difficult to apportion to each his exact share in the work, although experts as a rule declare in favor of the former. Dr. Arne is held responsible for its noble and stirring music—music which so appealed to Beethoven that he composed a set of five variations on it. Dr. Arnes' setting was first heard in 1740.

Crossing the Channel, the sound of the "Marseillaise" falls defiantly on our ears. "The sound of it," writes Carlyle, "will make the blood tingle in men's veins, and whole armies and assemblages will sing it with eyes weeping and burning, with hearts defiant of death, despot, and devil." Even in times of peace and quietness it is impossible to listen to its animating strains without experiencing a certain thrill, and its effects on an impetuous people in the troublous times of the past—and now—may be easily imagined. It had a great share in the first French Revolution, for in a few months after it was first made known every one was singing it, and the words "To arms! March!" were resounding in all parts of France. At every season of disorder since, its strains have excited the passions of the people, and if immortality can be predicted for any tune known to man, this is beyond question the one. And yet, as the story goes, both music and words were written in a single night, without any previous sketching out or after-elaboration. The author and composer was "an inspired Tyrtæan Colonel," one Rouget de Lisle, who had been, previous to his military experiences, a teacher of music. The scene of its birth was Strasbourg, and not Marseilles, but it was a force of Marseillaise which first marched to it—hence the title.

There is another theory regarding its authorship, which is found in that fascinating book, "The Englishman in

Paris." "It appears," says the writer, "that Rouget de Lisle had not the honesty to acknowledge openly his indebtedness to those who made his name immortal, and that his share in the 'Marseillaise' amounts to the first six strophes. He did not write a single note of the music. The music was composed by Alexandre Boucher, a celebrated violinist, in the year 1790, in the drawing-room of Mme. de Montaigne, at the request of a Colonel whom he had never met before, and whom he never saw again. Rouget de Lisle was an officer in the Engineers, and was for well-known reasons imprisoned in 1791. It was from this prison cell that he heard the stirring march, and at the request of his gaoler he adapted to the tune the words of a patriotic song he was then writing.

"Some time after the 'Marseillaise' had won fame for the young officer, he met Alexandre Boucher at a dinner-party in Paris. The violinist congratulated the young patriot on the success of his poem, laying stress on the word 'poem.' 'You don't say a word about the music,' remarked De Lisle; and then, in a moment of unwonted candour, he admitted that the music was not his own composition. Boucher thereupon modestly informed De Lisle that the celebrated march was his composition. They embraced each other fondly, as only Frenchmen can. When De Lisle recovered from the shock, he

naïvely remarked: 'Your music and my words go so well together that they seem to have sprung simultaneously from the same brain, and the world, even if I proclaimed my indebtedness to you, would never believe it.'"

The Russian National Anthem, "God Protect the Czar," was first performed at the Grand Theatre, Moscow, in December, 1833. Previously to this Russia had no national hymn, our "God Save the King" being deemed sufficient. The composer was Colonel M. Lvoff, and in return for the composition the Czar Nicholas presented him with a gold snuff-box set with diamonds. The music is thoroughly national, but the words have perhaps never been more truly expressive of the sentiments of the people than now.

The Austrian National Hymn is well known here as a hymn tune. It was composed by Haydn, and was performed for the first time at the celebration of the birthday of the Emperor Franz at Vienna, in 1797. Haydn himself was very fond of it. He used it in the variations in one of his quartets, and when he was dying he insisted on being taken from bed to the piano, when he played the air three times over, very solemnly, in the presence of his weeping servants. That was years ago—and history repeats itself. Today it is being played three times—morning, noon, and night—in the presence of a weeping and—as we believe it—defeated people.

JOSHUA BANNARD.

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